

Remarks

Claims 1-20, 24, 28, 32, 36, 39, 43, 47, 48, 50, 54 and 58 have been rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as being unpatentable over Applicant Admitted Prior Art (AAPA) in view of Hanna (US 7,054,905) and Pollack (US 6,505,236).

The above-mentioned rejection is respectfully traversed and submitted to be inapplicable to the claims for the following reasons.

Claim 1 is patentable over the combination of AAPA, Hanna and Pollack, since claim 1 recites an e-mail transmission/reception system having, in part, a mail terminal including a preparation unit operable to prepare an attached-file specifying e-mail including a unique identifier corresponding to an item selected by a user as a substitute for at least one attached file that a user wants to attach to a file attached e-mail, and a mail gateway including a construction unit operable to construct the file attached e-mail by attaching at least one attached file acquired by an attached file acquisition unit to the attached-file specifying e-mail received by a reception unit.

In the present invention as recited in claim 1, the mail gateway is designed to generate a unique identifier for each attached file via an identifier generation unit and transmit a list of generated identifiers to the mail terminal via a list transmission unit. The mail terminal is designed to receive the identifier list from the mail gateway via a list reception unit, display, based on the identifier list, items indicating the unique identifiers in a selectable manner via a selection receiving unit, and prepare the attached-file specifying e-mail including a unique identifier corresponding to an item selected by the user via a preparation unit. Further, the mail gateway is designed to receive the attached-file specifying e-mail via a reception unit, construct a file attached e-mail which includes an attached file corresponding to the selected unique identifier via a construction unit, and transmit the file attached e-mail via a mail transmission unit.

According to the above-discussed structure of claim 1, for example, the mail terminal transmits the created attached-file specifying e-mail to the mail gateway so that a file that the user desires to be attached to an e-mail can be attached by the mail gateway to the e-mail. Therefore, the mail terminal does not transmit/receive files of large size to/from the mail gateway, and instead transmits/receives identifiers of small size to/from the mail gateway. As a

result, the structure of the mail terminal as recited in claim 1 is useful in a situation where the transfer rate is low.

As an example of the operation of the present invention as recited in claim 1, Attachment A, submitted herewith, is referenced. It is noted that this discussion and Attachment A are for illustrative purposes in order to aid in the Examiner's understanding of the invention and is in no way intended to be limiting.

For illustrative purposes, the mail server and the mail gateway are illustrated in Attachment A as a single block. The mail server/mail gateway receives an e-mail having five files 1-5 attached thereto. The mail server/mail gateway generates an ID for each of the five files (ID1-ID5) attached to the e-mail. The mail server/mail gateway then transmits an e-mail including the five IDs (ID1-ID5) to the mail terminal. The mail terminal then displays items corresponding to the five IDs (ID1-ID5) so that the user of the mail terminal can select which of the five files corresponding to the five IDs (ID1-ID5) he/she wishes to include in an e-mail. In the present example, the user selects the second and fifth files to be included in the e-mail. The mail terminal then transmits to the mail server/mail gateway an e-mail indicating that the second and fifth files corresponding to ID2 and ID5, respectively, have been selected. Upon receipt of the e-mail from the mail terminal, the mail server/mail gateway creates an e-mail having the second and fifth files attached thereto and transmits the e-mail and attached files to a recipient. Based on this illustrative discussion of the operation of the present invention as recited in claim 1, it is clear that the mail terminal does not send/receive the five attached files, which can be large in size, but instead sends/receives the corresponding ID1-ID5. Thus, it is possible to reduce the file transfer load to/from the mail terminal. Further, the user of the mail terminal is able to select which of the five files from the five IDs (ID1-ID5) he/she wishes to attach to an e-mail and transmit only the selected files to the recipient. As will be discussed below, it is apparent that the combination of AAPA, Hanna and Pollack fails to disclose or suggest these features of the present invention as recited in claim 1.

AAPA discloses a system in which the mail terminal does not receive an attached file, per se, and transfers an e-mail including the attached file to an address. However, AAPA provides no disclosure or suggestion of a situation where multiple files have been attached to one e-mail. Further, AAPA provides no disclosure or suggestion of a situation where an identifier (ID) is associated with each attached file.

As an example of the operation of the system of AAPA in a situation where five files are attached to an e-mail, Attachment B, submitted herewith, is relied upon. As shown in Attachment B, a server receives an e-mail having five files attached thereto. The server separates the attached files from the e-mail, and attaches an ID to the e-mail (mail ID). Then, the server transmits an e-mail to the mail terminal that indicates that the five attached files have been received. The user of the mail terminal can then send an e-mail back to the server specifying a transfer destination for the attached files. The server will then attach the five files to the sent-back e-mail and transmit the e-mail including the five attachments to the recipient.

Based on the above discussion, AAPA assigns an ID with respect to each e-mail, and does not assign an ID to each attached file. Further, the information received by the mail terminal from the server only indicates whether there is an attached file, and does not indicate the number of attached files. Accordingly, the user of the mail terminal is only able to select whether to send all or none of the five attached files, and cannot selectively transfer certain ones of the five files. Therefore, as admitted in the rejection, AAPA fails to disclose or suggest the identifier generation unit and selection receiving unit as recited in claim 1.

Regarding Hanna, it discloses a system in which a file attached to an e-mail message is replaced with the file's location (i.e., a URL). (See Figure 2). The object of Hanna is to save attached files in a file server that is different from an e-mail server in order to prevent the mail server from being filled with attachments included with e-mail messages. (See column 1, lines 50-67).

As an example of the operation of the system of Hanna in a situation where five files are attached to an e-mail, Attachment C, submitted herewith, is relied upon. As illustrated in Attachment C, the e-mail server receives an e-mail to which five files have been attached. The e-mail server sends the five attached files to the file server and thereby prevents the mail server from being filled with the attached files. The e-mail server also sends an e-mail including URLs, each of which corresponds to one of the attached files, to the recipient. The recipient is then able to obtain the attached files from the file server using the URLs.

Regarding Hanna, it is stated in the outstanding Office Action that it would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art to modify the system of AAPA by including the above-discussed features of Hanna to meet the limitations of the present invention as recited in claim 1. However, it is submitted that this conclusion amounts to impermissible hindsight, and the present

invention as recited in claim 1 is not rendered obvious even if the system of AAPA is modified as suggested in the rejection.

Based on the above-discussed disclosure of Hanna, the combination of the features of Hanna with the system of AAPA would result in the creation of a system whereby a selection from among multiple URLs would be received and the selected URLs would be transferred as an e-mail. This system is explained with reference to Attachment D, which is submitted herewith for illustrative purposes.

As shown in Attachment D, the e-mail server saves the five attached files in the file server, and sends to the transfer (i.e., terminal) an e-mail in which URLs indicate the locations of the attached files. Based on the selection of URLs (URL2 and URL5), the e-mail server then sends to the recipient an e-mail including the two selected URLs (URL2 and URL5) from the five URLs (URL1-URL5). The recipient is then able to obtain the associated files from the file server using the URLs.

According to the system of Attachment D, the URLs are transmitted with the e-mail to the recipient, and the recipient is then able to obtain the associated files via the URLs. However, a URL is not an attached file, but an indicator of the location of a file. Therefore, the recipient needs to perform an additional operation to obtain the file corresponding to the URL. That is, the recipient is provided with information that allows him/her to obtain from the file server the files corresponding to the two received URLs (URL2 and URL5), but does not actually receive the files. In order to receive the files using the URLs, the recipient must launch an application, such as a web-browser. On the other hand, the present invention as recited in claim 1 is capable of providing to the recipient with the selected attached files.

Thus, in order to meet the limitations set forth in claim 1, it is necessary for the references to provide some disclosure or suggestion of replacing the URLs disclosed in Hanna with the attached files themselves. However, neither Hanna, nor AAPA, discloses or suggests such a feature. In fact, Hanna actually teaches away from constructing (i.e., the claimed construction unit) a file attached e-mail which includes an attached file corresponding to a unique identifier (i.e. the identifier is replaced with an attached file), since it operates in the opposite manner by replacing files with URLs. As a result, it would not have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art to combine the teaching of Hanna with AAPA, and such a combination fails to disclose or suggest the above-discussed features of claim 1.

As for Pollack, it discloses a system whereby an attached file is stripped from an e-mail and a handler corresponding to the attached file is instead attached. A URL is disclosed as a specific example of the handler. (See column 5, lines 17-22 and Figure 1). Thus, the system of Pollack is similar to that of Hanna, and also fails to disclose or suggest the above-discussed features of claim 1.

In consideration of the above discussion, AAPA, Hanna and Pollack, either individually or in combination, fail to disclose or suggest (1) a mail terminal including a preparation unit operable to prepare an attached-file specifying e-mail including a unique identifier corresponding to an item selected by a user as a substitute for at least one attached file that a user wants to attach to a file attached e-mail, and (2) a mail gateway including a construction unit operable to construct the file attached e-mail by attaching at least one attached file acquired by an attached file acquisition unit to the attached-file specifying e-mail received by a reception unit, which are recited in claim 1. Therefore, one of ordinary skill in the art would not have been motivated to modify or combine the references so as to obtain the invention as recited in claim 1.

As for claims 5, 9, 13, 17, 20, 24, 28, 32, 36, 39, 43, 47, 50, 54 and 58, they are patentable over the combination of AAPA, Hanna and Pollack for including at least one feature similar to one of the features discussed above with regard to claim 1, which is not disclosed or suggested by the combination.

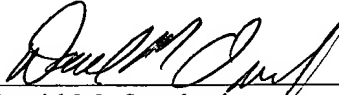
Because of the above-mentioned distinctions, it is believed clear that claims 1-20, 24, 28, 32, 36, 39, 43, 47, 48, 50, 54 and 58 are allowable over the references relied upon in the rejection. Furthermore, it is submitted that the distinctions are such that a person having ordinary skill in the art at the time of invention would not have been motivated to make any combination of the references of record in such a manner as to result in, or otherwise render obvious, the present invention as recited in claims 1-20, 24, 28, 32, 36, 39, 43, 47, 48, 50, 54 and 58. Therefore, it is submitted that claims 1-20, 24, 28, 32, 36, 39, 43, 47, 48, 50, 54 and 58 are clearly allowable over the prior art of record.

In view of the above amendments and remarks, it is submitted that the present application is now in condition for allowance. The Examiner is invited to contact the undersigned by telephone if it is felt that there are issues remaining which must be resolved before allowance of the application.

Respectfully submitted,

Susumu KOBAYASHI et al.

By:



David M. Ovedovitz
Registration No. 45,336
Attorney for Applicants

DMO/jmj
Washington, D.C. 20006-1021
Telephone (202) 721-8200
Facsimile (202) 721-8250
February 22, 2008